

March 1, 2016  
Senator Slossberg and  
Representative Fleischmann  
Co- Chairs of the Education Committee

Dear Sen. Slossberg, Rep. Fleischmann and esteemed members of the Education Committee,

I am submitting this written testimony in full support of HB 5470 AAC A Pilot Program for Students in High School Interested in Pursuing a College Degree in Education.

I am the President of the New Britain Board of Education. Our school system is home to over 10,000 students - 80 % Minority enrollment. Our teaching staff is currently at 13.2% Minority hires and our administrative staff is at 24% Minority hires. By Sheff standards, all but three of our schools, would be identified as segregated having 75% or more Minority enrollment. Our Board is committed to having our certified staff become increasingly more reflective of our student body. We strongly believe that our students should see themselves in our educators and role models. To this end, we created a "grow our own" partnership with CCSU several years ago. Our upper class students grades 11 & 12 have the opportunity to enroll in a high school level Teacher Cadet course at New Britain High School followed by a credit bearing college exploratory course in education offered by CCSU. The time is now to enhance and expand this partnership into a direct pipeline from high school to college enrollment. We have broken ground on this issue but need to build upon the foundation. Our Minority students need a connection to the field of education and a connection to an Institute for Higher Education that will be both welcoming and supportive. We must work together to break down existing barriers and create new opportunities through increased and supported access.

The lack of certified Minority staff is an issue for our State and our Nation. Let us be the model others seek to emulate.

Sincerely,

Sharon Beloin Saavedra, President  
New Britain Board of Education  
Urban Voices